

Meaning, Need, and Evolution of International Organisations

1. Concept and Significance of International Organisations

- International organisations emerge from the recognition that **conflicts among states need not always lead to war**, as disputes can be addressed through dialogue and peaceful settlement.
- Such organisations are **not super-states**; rather, they are created by sovereign states and operate through their consent.

Their importance lies in:

- Maintaining **international peace and security**.
- Facilitating **cooperation on global challenges** such as disease eradication, climate change, and economic stability.
- Cooperation is difficult because states differ on:
 - Sharing of costs and benefits.
 - Enforcement of agreements.
 - Trust that others will honour commitments.
- International organisations therefore provide:
 - **Rules, procedures, and bureaucratic mechanisms**.
 - Platforms for negotiation and confidence-building.
 - Frameworks for collective action.

2. Changing Context After the Cold War: The end of the Cold War produced a **unipolar world dominated by the United States**, raising concerns about unchecked power.

- This led to debates on whether the United Nations could:
 - Promote dialogue with the dominant power.
 - Limit unilateral actions.
 - Preserve multilateralism.

3. Evolution of the United Nations

(a) Failure of the League of Nations

- Established after the First World War to prevent future conflicts.
- Ultimately **failed to prevent the Second World War**, demonstrating limits of early collective security efforts.

(b) Founding of the United Nations (1945)

- Created immediately after the Second World War through the **UN Charter signed by 51 states**.
- Core objectives:
 - Prevent conflicts from escalating into war.
 - Limit hostilities where conflict occurs.
 - Promote **social and economic development** as a foundation for peace.

(c) Membership and Institutional Structure

- Nearly universal membership of independent states.
- **General Assembly:** one state, one vote.
- **Security Council:**
 - Five permanent members — United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China.
 - Reflects **power distribution after World War II**.
- Secretary-General serves as the **chief administrative and representative figure** of the UN.
- Numerous specialised agencies address health, development, refugees, culture, and human rights.

Reform Debates, Security Council Issues, Global Governance

4. Need for Reform in the Post-Cold War Era

- Reform seen as essential because:
 1. **Global power relations have changed.**
 2. New states and new challenges have emerged.
- Two broad reform dimensions:
 1. **Structural and procedural reform** of UN organs.
 2. **Expansion of jurisdiction and agenda** of the organisation.

5. Changing Global Realities

Key transformations shaping reform debates:

- Collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Emergence of the United States as the **sole superpower**.
- Rise of **China and India**.
- Rapid economic growth in Asia.
- Increase in UN membership.
- New global threats:
 - Ethnic conflict, terrorism, nuclear proliferation.
 - Climate change and environmental degradation.
 - Epidemics and civil wars.

6. Reform of the Security Council

(a) Main Criticisms

- Does not reflect **contemporary political realities**.
- Dominated by a few powerful states and Western interests.
- Lacks **equitable geographical representation**.

(b) Proposed Criteria for New Permanent Members

- Major economic and military power.
- Significant contribution to UN budget.
- Large population.
- Commitment to democracy and human rights.
- Capacity to enhance representativeness and diversity.

(c) Problems with Reform Criteria

- No agreement on measurement of power or contribution.
- Representation may be based on geography, development, or culture — each problematic.
- Abolition of veto debated but resisted by permanent members.
- Without veto, great powers might **withdraw support**, weakening the UN.

7. Jurisdictional Expansion and New Responsibilities

Major initiatives to enhance UN relevance:

- Peacebuilding Commission.
- Responsibility to protect populations from atrocities.
- Human Rights Council.
- Millennium Development Goals.
- Condemnation of terrorism.
- Democracy Fund and closure of Trusteeship Council.
- Persistent dilemmas remain regarding **intervention, definition of rights, and feasibility of development goals**.



India, Unipolarity, and Continuing Relevance of the UN

8. India's Position on UN Reform

(a) Rationale for Supporting Reform

- Desire for a **strengthened and revitalised UN**.
- Emphasis on development as essential for peace.
- Concern that Security Council composition is **unrepresentative of developing countries**.

(b) India's Claim to Permanent Membership

- One of the **most populous countries** and the **largest democracy**.
- Long and active participation in UN initiatives, especially peacekeeping.
- Growing economic strength and consistent financial contributions.

- Symbolic and strategic value for foreign policy influence.

(c) Obstacles to India's Candidature

- Opposition from regional rivals and sceptical states.
- Concerns about nuclear capability and regional conflicts.
- Demand that other regions (Africa, Latin America) also gain representation.
- Overall difficulty of achieving consensus on expansion.

9. The UN in a Unipolar World

- US dominance limits the UN's ability to **check unilateral power**.
- American influence derives from:
 - Military and economic superiority.
 - Financial contribution and location of UN headquarters.
 - Veto power and bureaucratic presence.
- Yet the UN still:
 - Provides a **forum for dialogue and negotiation**.
 - Allows global opinion to shape US behaviour indirectly.
 - Prevents complete unilateralism.



10. Continuing Importance of International Organisations

- Despite imperfections, the UN remains **indispensable in an interdependent world**.
- Growing technological and social interconnections increase need for:
 - Collective governance.
 - Multilateral cooperation.
 - Institutional frameworks for peace and development.
- Future stability depends on **effective support and reform** of international organisations.